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ABSTRACT

The home room teacher has the responsibility of enabling field experience students, student teachers, and visiting specialists to fulfill their role successfully. The field experience student is ordinarily not expected to ever take full responsibility for the instruction of an entire class for any period of time. The agenda for this student would include heavy emphasis on introductory and assisting activities. Some of these include becoming familiar with the school and the classroom routine, and working with small groups, helping individual students, some evaluation of pupil progress, and assisting in other class activities. The student teacher, after completing orientation activities, should participate in assisting activities, lesson planning, disciplinary activities, and evaluation of pupil progress. The student teacher profits from steadily increasing amounts of interaction with pupils. The cooperating teacher can provide valuable guidance on the wise use of time for the student teacher. An inservice teacher specialist should be accorded the authority of a full teacher in the school. Mutual respect and cooperation between two inservice teachers is the key to a successful experience for a specialist in a classroom. (JD)

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THE CARE AND FEEDING OF VISITING TEACHERS

by

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Visiting Teacher: (1) Any teacher, whether pre-service or not, who visits a classroom to help students learn and/or gain competence in instructional skills; (2) a particular label worn by a group of in-service teachers who fulfill a specific task.

Visiting teacher as the term is used in this writing refers to the former definition above. Many of us in our teaching careers will be fortunate enough to have another human being enter our instructional space and participate in the education of our students with us. As is the case with other human interactions, how self-actualizing the experiences will be for all concerned will depend largely upon how well the interaction is managed.

Teachers who visit other teacher's classrooms are usually of these varieties: (1) pre-service interns who are involved in field laboratory experiences before student teaching; (2) student teachers; (3) inservice teachers having some special reason for sharing the classroom with the "home room" (heretofore referred to as the HR) teacher.

Morris (1977) devised a useful classification system to describe the activities that teachers engage in within the classroom. Teachers basically do four kinds of activities:

1. Introductory activities
2. Planning activities
3. Assisting activities
4. Full responsibility activities

A visiting teacher participates in these activities in varying amounts and degrees according to his defined role. How to enable interns, student teachers, and inservice teachers interpret those roles and fulfill them is the focus of the present writing.

The pre-service intern is ordinarily not expected to ever take full responsibility for the instruction of an entire class of students for any period of time. If this occurs, it may not be in the best interests of the intern or the class. Child labor laws protect children from being impressed into service at adult jobs before they are maturationally prepared for the same reasons that university policies protect pre-service interns. The agenda for the pre-service intern would include a heavy emphasis of introductory and assisting activities. Some of those include:

Introductory Activities

1. Introduction to principal, other teachers, and class
2. Observation of HR teacher's strategies
3. Learn daily schedule, fire drill procedures
4. Learning attendance keeping systems
5. Make seating chart
6. Learn HR teacher's grade book system
7. Learn location of instructional and duplicating equipment
8. Learn how to operate basic audio-visual equipment

Assisting Activities

1. Supervising student groups
2. Help individuals with seat-work
3. Direct small group discussions and projects
4. Direct opening activities-roll call, lunch reports, etc.
5. Some evaluation of pupil progress on daily work

The pre-service teacher expects to have some involvement with the activities of the HR class, but generally knows not to expect full responsibility during his tenure in that capacity. Indeed, to put such a visiting teacher in charge of a class under any but the most

unusual circumstances would likely be to set the stage for a failure experience. Teachers are made, not born, and those who supervise visiting teachers at this embryonic stage should ask themselves the question: "Is this task premature?" The answer to that question may be "No, this task is appropriate for someone of this level of educational maturity." One of the authors saw a sophomore intern placed in charge of a music class of about 95 kindergarten children one morning, with no warning or opportunity for preparation. This saturation continued for 25 minutes. The countenance of the visiting intern at the end of that ordeal would be a sufficient stimulus to most humane individuals to discount the advisability of such a procedure. It is important to give this level of visiting teacher a gradual initiation to the internal workings of a school. Interactions with students, especially large numbers of students, are among the more complex interactions that take place in a school environment. Working with students can provide meaningful experiences if those experiences are carefully administered.

The next kind of teacher who visits a classroom is the student teacher. This visiting teacher customarily has had two or more years of additional university preparation than the pre-service intern has had. The student has had more experience in curriculum writing, lesson planning, evaluation of pupil progress, and the operation of audiovisual equipment. The student teacher, after completing the introductory activities, will participate in assisting activities, including team teaching, and two other types of classroom activities: planning activities and full responsibility. Some typical kinds of these categories of activities are:

Planning Activities	Full Responsibility
1. Lesson planning	1. All responsibility for introductory, planning, or assisting activities
2. Making special materials	2. Responsibility for disciplinary activities, responsible within the classroom
3. Making interest centers	3. Responsible for all instruction
4. Obtaining A-V materials	4. Responsible for evaluation of pupil progress, subject to review by HR teacher
5. Inviting outside speakers	
6. Arranging field trips	
7. Planning a unit or units	

The addition of planning activities and full responsibility represents a new plateau for this visiting teacher. As an intern, the visiting teacher is essentially a reacting agent to structures already within the school. As a student teacher, the visiting teacher has an opportunity to create his own structures. Having some lesson planning skills, he has opportunity to experience established strategies of helping students attain the stated objectives of the school program. He may also wish to develop some new avenues for arriving at the same goals. The sequencing of increasing responsibility usually begins with introductory activities, followed by some exposure to assisting activities, then a combination of planning and assisting activities, followed by full responsibility. At the entry point of student teaching, the student teacher is (hopefully) at a point where pre-requisite skills enable him to profit from steadily increasing amounts of interaction with students. A key phrase here is steadily increasing. The student teacher should not be inducted into full responsibility in a "sink or swim" fashion. Rather, such responsibility should be added a period or a subject at a time until the student teacher has full responsibility for all classes. This period of full responsibility

in most programs is from one to two weeks.

Fatigue is a frequently-reported, unanticipated factor in the student teaching experience. The quality of stress induced by student life is different from the quality of stress experienced in teaching. The quantity of hours spent on-task, the number of calories burned, and the concentration required for being a student or a student teacher may be close to identical, but the quality of stress is different. It is not unusual for student teachers to report drastic changes in bedtimes, recreational patterns, and eating habits during the latter phases of the semester. Student teaching is an exercise in several kinds of management. Time management skills must already exist or be developed very quickly. HR teachers can help in the care and (literally) the feeding of this type of visiting teacher by giving pointers on how to work smarter and not harder, how to establish eating habits which will give high energy levels throughout the teaching day, and how to pursue recreational activities which dispel stress. Much of student teacher's energy is devoted to decision making. Much of this energy burnoff can be minimized if the HR teacher will set clear boundaries about jurisdiction. Should I become involved in what these students are doing or not? What should I do if I do become involved? How long will it take to get this straightened out? Will my actions cause me embarrassment? These are things that weigh upon the student teacher's mind as he sees a disciplinary situation developing. If the quidelines set by the HR teacher are clear, less energy will be wasted in fruitless worry. Some energy will be saved just by knowing when to hand the problem to the HR teacher. Student teachers

as a rule have not developed the stamina for these interactions that the HR teachers have for being effective all day long. Careful supervision will help this visiting teacher profit from his experience.

The third type of visiting teacher is a special services inservice teacher. The special service performed may be for language difficulties, speech or hearing impairment, orthopediac handicap, or it may be to present a special curricular offering to the entire class. This visiting teacher may spend only a few hours a week in the HR classroom. At any rate, the visiting teacher should be accorded the trappings of any other teacher in the same school. This should include a teacher's desk (a symbol or authority), a grade book, and teacher's supplies. The same rules of noninfringement that apply to the HR teacher's desk should apply to the visiting teacher's desk.

Since this arrangement involves two trained, inservice teachers, further definition of roles and division are possible. The division may fall along the lines of a specialty need (as in the case of a special education visiting teacher), or might be along content specialty lines. For example, in a team teaching situation, one teacher might have a specialty in reading, while another might have academic preparation or interest in social studies. During reading, one teacher would be the team leader while the other would assist. During social studies class, the roles would be reversed.

This method of dividing labor may also be applied to classroom management. Most teachers have one level of tolerance for one type

of classroom management problem, and another level for another type of problem. He may be intolerant on theft but over sympathetic on name-calling, for instance. Extremes in levels of tolerance can reduce a teacher's effectiveness in dealing with that problem. In the ideal team relationship, the less effective areas of one teacher complement those of the other. Maximizing the use of the effective areas to the benefit of the student should be the aim of such a team relationship.

In dealing with any visiting teacher, the quality of professional regard in the presence of students is a critical factor. This can make or break the effectiveness of the relationship. Where professional respect is shown, having two teachers in a classroom even for part of the day can be of considerable benefit to all concerned.

REFERENCE

Morris, John E., Student Teaching Handbook. Texas A & M University, College of Education, Department of Educational Curriculum and Instruction, 1977.